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An interview with:

MARCOS BAGHDATIS

STEPHEN DUCKITT: Hello, everyone. Welcome to what will hopefully be the first of a series of monthly conference calls for media based in the International Group region of ATP World Tour tournaments. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the call and also to welcome onto the call Marcos Baghdatis.

As you'd be aware, Marcos has had an outstanding season so far this year and we'd like to thank him for being a part of the call today.

Without any further ado, we'll get straight into it.

I have a question for Marcos. The Kuala Lumpur tournament has assembled one of the strongest ATP 250 fields with five of the top 10 players confirmed to play there. What are your expectations for Kuala Lumpur this year?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: For sure, I know it will be a tough tournament. I'm willing to go there and try to win every match I play and try to basically make a good run. That's my goal. Just fight for every match and try to find the solution of winning.

I'm pretty confident that I'm able to do that.

STEPHEN DUCKITT: We'll now open it up for questions.

Q. Marcos, would you be playing the Brisbane International again to kick start your year for the Australian Open?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: Yes, I think I will. It's in my mind. Yes, I think I will.

Q. Do you think that would be the best way of preparing for Melbourne Park?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: Yeah, for sure. I like Australia. I like playing there. So for sure it would be a great preparation. Yeah, I think I will go play there.

Q. You won Sydney last year. Do you think if you went well in Brisbane, playing Sydney would be something you also could do, or would that be too taxing before the Open?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: It depends. It depends on how I feel at that moment. I cannot answer that question. It depends on how many matches I'll play in Brisbane, how much fatigue I will have on me. It depends.

Q. Marcos, what are your reasons for bypassing the Commonwealth Games next month? What are your thoughts there?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: When is that?

Q. It's early October in India.

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: Yeah, because it's so hard. It's not easy to just skip a tournament. It makes you skip a lot of weeks. I mean, a tennis player cannot afford to miss the important ATP events at that time as well.

Q. Marcos, given the fact that you won one title this year, how would you recap 2010 in relation to what you achieved in 2005 and 2006?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I think it's been a great year in different ways, you know. It's been a great year for me because it's been two years I'm not playing in this level. That's why it's been a great year. Lately I played a lot of matches with the top 15 guys, played a lot of them. I beat three, four guys in the top 10. It's a very good run, a very good year for me, knowing that for two years I didn't play this level. I was 150 in the world last year. So that's the reason it's been a good year.

You know, I'm finding back my rhythm. I know I didn't play so good in the Grand Slams this year. But, you know, I'm pretty positive. I wasn't preparing for the Grand Slams for the moment because I just wanted to play matches, play tournaments. That's what I did. Maybe next year I'll give it a shot on the Grand Slams.

Q. You've beaten some top guys as you've shown this year, but you've fallen to guys who have been further down the pecking order. Does that have anything to say, as you mentioned earlier, with your consistency, or is it just a question of preparation or something else?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: You know when you're injured, you cannot prepare. I was injured for a long time. When you're injured, you cannot prepare yourself well. You go on the match and you have pain a bit everywhere. It's a tough thing.

It's a bit of the preparation I did lately, the last year, a bit of preparation. A bit of consistency, too. A bit of everything, I can say. You know, I think that's the reason why.

Q. How do you see next year? What sort of goals do you start setting for yourself?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I'm not going to set any goals for the moment. This year is not finished yet. I think I have five, six more tournaments to play. I think I want to concentrate on that for the moment. Then when the year stops, I'll start thinking about the next year.

Q. Just a word about Nadal. He's achieved the slam. What do you have to say about him since you are very much a colleague of his?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: What can I say, you know? I mean, he won a slam, but I think it's not logic, but everybody was waiting for that. He's a great athlete, great tennis player. Personally also he's a great person. I have respect for him.

Congratulations to him. I wish him luck to the future. I cannot say anything more.

Q. I wanted to ask you something about the US Open Series which you played so well. I know you said you're not targeting Grand Slams, but given your preparation leading up to the US Open, how disappointed were you there?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I was very disappointed. But it was a positive thing. You know, when you get to a Grand Slam, if you don't prepare it the way you want to, the way you wanted things to go because of playing too much before. I played New Haven before the tournament, too. I just wanted to play matches. I just wanted to, you know, just win matches because it's been a long time I didn't have a run

like that. I just wanted that to happen. I wasn't thinking about the US Open.

But when the time came, I felt a bit stressed, a bit bad, a bit heavy on the court. I start to feel a bit like so heavy on the court, thinking a lot. That cost me and I didn't play my best tennis.

I didn't find the solution to win, so it was a bit disappointing. But now everything is finished. What I did, it was positive. That's all I can say.

Q. What changes, if any, has your new coach made to your game post Wimbledon?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: Just being more aggressive, maybe more consistent on the serve. Just being more aggressive on the return. Just like small things that make a difference.

Q. You beat Federer at Indian Wells at the start of the year. Going by the fact he hasn't had a great year, do you think he may have lost a bit in recent times?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I don't think he's lost something. He still won a Grand Slam this year. I think tennis now, it's so, so physically tough that, I mean, that's why it's more difficult for him.

But I don't think he's lost, I mean, something. He's Roger. Maybe he's going to come back next year and start winning everything again. You never know. I think his tennis is there. It's just maybe mentally he's a bit tired, and that's all.

Like I said, tennis now, it's so tough physically, mentally that you cannot afford to miss any chances or anything. So I think he didn't lose it. It's just maybe he's tired a bit.

Q. What made you decide to play the Kremlin Cup this year instead of Stockholm, where you won the title last year?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: Because last year I wanted to play Moscow Kremlin Cup. I asked for a wild card. Moscow didn't give me. I always wanted to play Moscow. It's easier to go there after Shanghai. It's not so far.

Yeah, I always wanted to play Moscow. But last year they didn't give me a wild card. So finally I got into Stockholm, and that's why I played Stockholm. So this year I'm playing Moscow.

Q. What do you like to visit in Moscow?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I've never been there, so I don't know.

Q. You don't know anything about Russia like Red Square, the Kremlin?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: No.

Q. Which Russian players are the most dangerous rivals?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: All the players are dangerous. It's always tough when you go to play tournaments. Everybody wants to win. Everybody wants to win matches.

I think for sure Youzhny, Davydenko, these two guys are going to be the toughest.

Q. Do you have any special relationships with the top Russian players? If you want to call somebody or meet somebody in Moscow, maybe Marat Safin?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: No, not really.

Q. You moved to a higher ranking this year, but some people say that injury and physical fitness have restrained your status. Do you agree with that?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: What does that mean?

Q. Injury and your physical conditioning has sort of held you back a little bit. Do you agree with that?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: No, I don't, because I didn't get injured this year. Physically I'm feeling good. I'm progressing. So I don't think so.

Q. You won the China Open in Beijing in 2006. What are your goals for both the China Open and the Shanghai Rolex Masters this year?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: It's like every tournament: it's to go there and try to win all matches that you play. Every opponent is very tough. It will be the toughest two tournaments in the world. So it's just to go out there and try to find a way to win every match and basically try to win the tournament.

Q. Obviously you might play Brisbane this year. What is the benefit of playing tournaments in Australia before the Australian Open?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: The heat, the weather, the time zone. You're in the same country, so travel is not so far. It's really important

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for me to go there a month before the Australian Open and prepare well.

Q. You've played both the Medibank International, and Kooyong Classic in Melbourne. What are the advantages and disadvantages of playing in each of those tournaments a week before the Grand Slam?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: I don't think there are disadvantages. It's good to play some matches before a Grand Slam. I think it's an advantage.

Q. What is the benefit of playing that week in either of those two tournaments?

MARCOS BAGHDATIS: It's playing matches. It's playing matches on the same surface. When you start the season, you don't have a lot of matches on your belt, so you need matches. I think before the Australian Open you need more matches than another Grand Slam because you didn't have those matches before. You know, you're coming out from lots of practice, lots of gym work. You need some matches.

STEPHEN DUCKITT: I think that covers everyone. On that note, we'll let Marcos go and enjoy his day and wish him luck in the upcoming Asian swing tournaments. Thank you, everyone, for your participation.

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